

Independent Democrat.

TERMS, \$3,

"FREE TRADE; LOW DUTIES; NO DEBT; SEPARATION FROM BANKS; ECONOMY; RETRENCHMENT; AND STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE CONSTITUTION."—Calhoun.

In Advance.

Volume 2.

CANTON, MISSISSIPPI, SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 16, 1844.

Number 27.

The Independent Democrat,
IS EDITED AND PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY
BY E. G. HENRY.

TERMS.—Three Dollars, invariably in advance. Persons wishing to discontinue will please give notice thereof in writing. No subscription received for a less time than six months.

Advertisements inserted at the rate of One Dollar per square, (ten lines or less,) for the first insertion, and fifty cents a square for each continuance.

Advertisements which are not limited on the manuscript, as to the number of insertions, will be continued until ordered out, and charged accordingly.

Articles of a personal nature, whenever admitted, will be charged at the rate of Two Dollars for every ten lines for each insertion. Political circulars or public addresses, for the benefit of individual persons or companies, will be charged as advertisements, and at the same rates.

Announcing Candidates for office will be charged at the rate of Ten Dollars each.

All Job Work must be paid for on delivery.

Postage on letters must be paid, or they will not be attended to.

From the Globe.

DISASTER ON THE PRINCETON.

We stop the press to announce a most lamentable catastrophe which occurred on board the Princeton steamer this evening. By the bursting of one of the great guns, the Secretary of State, Mr. Upshur, the Secretary of the Navy, Gov. Gilmer, Commodore Kennon, Chief of the Bureau of Construction of the Navy, Virgil Maxey, esq., and Mr. Gardiner, of Southampton, New York, were instantly killed; and six sailors are reported badly wounded. One of the President's servants, a colored man, has since died.

Colonel Benton and Captain Stockton were slightly injured. The accident happened about 3 o'clock, some two or three miles below Alexandria. Col. Benton's injury arose not from any fragment of the gun, but merely from the concussion. He was at the butt of the gun taking its range when it fired. He was not sensible of the running effect until he had called for aid to the bleeding sailors. He was stunned for a time, but was enabled to walk after reaching the shore, and has given a distinct account of the dreadful scene. Capt. Stockton was burned by the powder, but not seriously injured.

Captain Stockton having on successive days extended invitations to visit his ship to the executive and committees of Congress, and then to both houses—invited the ladies of the city to an entertainment on this, which was meant as the gala-day of his beautiful ship. It opened brightly, but has closed in the most dreadful gloom over our community. The only circumstance calculated to relieve the all-pervading distress, is that of the multitude of ladies who were on board the ship, not one was injured. The happy exemption of such a multitude of the tender sex, who witnessed the havoc made in the midst of them of the most distinguished and beloved of their countrymen, while it brings some solace to the circle of their immediate friends, cannot but deepen the sympathies which they, and the whole community, feel for the bereaved families of those who have fallen. Mr. Upshur and Mr. Gilmer were idols in the happy family by which each was surrounded. The elder children of Mr. Gilmer are just grown; the younger still in the nurse's arms. Com. Kennon, Mr. Maxey, and Mr. Gardiner are all torn from family endearments—from wives and children.

We understand that Mrs. Gilmer was upon the deck when her husband fell. It was the third discharge of the gun (and fired at the request of Mr. Gilmer) that burst it. The daughter of Mr. Upshur, several of the family of Com. Kennon, and the daughters of Mr. Gardiner, were on board the steamer; but none of them, except Mrs. Gilmer, were apprized of the death of those most dear to them, until after their return to the city. Almost all the ladies were below, at dinner, when the catastrophe occurred. Mrs. Gilmer was brought to the city almost in a state of distraction.

There were two hundred ladies on board, and during the two discharges of the gun, were on the deck; and many of them approached very near to observe the course of the ball after it struck the water. President Tyler was there also, but had attended the ladies to dinner before the third discharge.

FURTHER PARTICULARS.

The bodies of the gentlemen who were killed yesterday on board the Princeton were brought up this morning in the steamboat Joseph Johnson, in the charge of a committee of army and navy officers and citizens, of whom Com. Shubrick was chairman. On reaching the steamboat wharf in this city, the corpses were each deposited in a hearse, and a funeral procession was formed, which proceeded to the President's mansion, where they were received by a committee appointed for the

purpose, and deposited in the east room, where they will remain until the funeral. This we consider a just respect for the deceased, and as marking a very kind and proper concern for the feelings of their bereaved families and friends.

We learn that the seamen who were wounded, (nine in number) were sent yesterday, soon after the explosion took place, to the naval hospital near the navy-yard, and that only one of them is dangerously (though not mortally) wounded. The others were injured but slightly, and are in a fair way of recovery.

A correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger, who was one of the guests on board the Princeton, gives the following particulars of the dreadful scene:

To observe the effect of the shot, I had posted myself on the nearest larboard cannonade gun, and the sailors had erected a kind of scaffolding for the ladies to stand on by the side of me. One or two had taken their position there, and beside me stood Mr. Secretary Upshur, intent upon witnessing the whole manœuvre. I offered him my place, but he declined, saying he preferred to stand where he was—the precise spot where an hour afterwards he was torn to pieces.

Captain Stockton's great gun was again loaded with shot, and another trial made of its strength and efficiency. The gun was pointed to leeward, and behind it stood Capt. Stockton; a little to the left of him Mr. J. W. Tyson, Assistant P. M. Gen. of your city.

By the side of the latter, a little behind him, stood Mr. Strickland, also of your city, and a little to the right of, but behind him, Col. Benton who had a lady with him, and Judge Phelps, Senator from Vermont.

At the leeward of the gun stood Judge Upshur, Governor Gilmer, and a little behind them Mr. Maxey of Maryland. By the side of him stood Mr. Gardiner of New York, and Commodore Kennon of the Navy.

When the gun was fired the whole ship shook, a dense cloud of smoke enveloped the whole group on the fore-castle; but when this blew away, an awful scene presented itself to the view of the spectator.

The lower part of the gun from the trunnions to the breech was blown off. Mr. Upshur was badly cut over the eye and in his legs—his clothes were literally torn from his body—he expired in about three minutes. Gov. Gilmer, of Virginia, was found equally badly injured. He had evidently been struck by the section of the gun before it reached Mr. Upshur.

Mr. Sykes, the member from New Jersey, endeavored to raise him from the ground but was unable. A mattress was procured, and he was placed on it; before any medical assistance could be procured he was no longer among the living.

Mr. Maxey had his arms and one of his legs cut off, the pieces of flesh hanging to the mutilated limbs, cold and bloodless, in a manner truly frightful. He died instantly.

Mr. Gardner, of New York, and Com. Kennon, lingered about half an hour; but they did not seem for a single moment to be conscious of their fate, and expired almost without a groan. The flags of the Union were placed over the dead bodies as their winding sheets.

Behind the gun, the scene, though at first equally distressing, was less alarming. Captain Stockton, who was knocked down, almost instantly rose to his feet, and jumped on the wooden carriage to survey the whole effect of the calamity. All the hair of his head and face was burnt off, and he stood calm and undismayed, but silent over the wreck. In addition to the deaths already mentioned, about a dozen sailors were badly wounded: one was dead, and behind him Col. Benton, Judge Phelps, and Mr. Strickland, as if dead, extended upon the deck. On that side, by a singular concatenation of circumstances, Mr. Tyson of Philadelphia, was the only person who stood his ground, though a piece of the gun weighing about two pounds, had passed through his hat about two inches from his skull, and fallen down by the side of him.

The lady who had Col. Benton's arm was actually blown into the rigging, but not hurt. Col. Benton exclaimed, immediately after he fell, "Lord, I am hurt!" but he was only stunned. He was carried aft and placed on a mattress, where Mrs. Benton and his friends administered to him what aid they could, which, however, he repeatedly declined, saying there was nothing the matter with him. He tasted a little brandy, and was soon after able to walk with some slight assistance, over the railing of the ship on board the steamboat that took the company to Washington. Judge Phelps, of Vermont, had his hat blown or knocked off, and the buttons of his coat torn, but he was not otherwise injured. Mr. Strickland of Philadelphia was not at all injured, and instantly recovered his position.

Miss Woodbury and Miss Cooper, who, in company of Captain Reed of the Army,

and Mr. Welles, of Philadelphia, had been standing on a leeward gun, were not hurt; but Miss Woodbury, (the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Senator from New Hampshire,) had her whole face sprinkled with blood, which, however, we are glad to say, was not her own.

Such was the force of the explosion, that the starboard and larboard bulwarks were literally shattered, and that part of the gun I described was blown into twenty or thirty pieces besides the two principal sections.

Judge Wilkins was only saved by a witticism of his. He had taken his stand by the side of Gov. Gilmer, but some remarks falling from the lips of the latter, and perceiving that the gun was about to be fired, he exclaimed, "Though Secretary of war, I don't like this firing, and believe that I shall run." So saying he retreated, suiting the action to the word, and was saved.

The President himself had taken his position but a few minutes previous, precisely where Gov. Gilmer was killed; but for some reason or other went aft, and was thus providentially saved.

The most heart-rending scene however, was that which followed. The two daughters of Mr. Gardiner of New York, were both on board, and lamented the death of their father, while Mrs. Gilmer from whom they in vain attempted to keep the dreadful news of the death of her husband, presented truly a spectacle fit to be depicted by a tragedian.

There she sat on deck, with her hair dishevelled, pale as death, struggling with her feelings, and with the dignity of a woman—her lips quivering, her eyes fixed and upturned, without a tear, only the corners a little moist, soliloquizing. "Oh certainly not!—Mr. Gilmer cannot be dead! Who would dare to injure him? Yes, oh Lord, have mercy upon me! Oh Lord have mercy on him!" And then still more apparently calm and seeming to be collected, with the furies tearing her heart within, "I beseech ye, gentlemen, to tell me where my husband is?"

"Oh, impossible!—impossible!—and he can be dead!—impossible!"

Here Mr. Senator Rives of Virginia, drew near.

"Come near, Mr. Rives," she said in a soft whisper, which resembled Ophelia's madness, "tell me where my husband is—tell me whether he is dead—now certainly Mr. Rives, this is impossible—is it not?" Mr. Rives stood speechless the tears trickling down his cheeks. "I tell you, Mr. Rives, it is impossible," she almost screamed; and then again moderating her voice, "Now do, Mr. Rives, tell his wife whether her husband lives?" Here several ladies exclaimed, "O God grant that she may be able to cry. It would certainly relieve her some. If not she must die of a broken heart."

The President, Robert Tyler, John Tyler, jr., and many other officers remained on board the Princeton when we left.

There were but two surgeons on board at the time of the disaster. Dr. Thomas and Dr. Hunt the regular physicians of the ship. Every attention was shown to the wounded.

The following particulars respecting the firing and management of the immense guns on board the Princeton, will be read with increased interest at this time. They are contained in a letter giving an account of the excursion which the Princeton made, with a large party of visitors, on the 20th February, just eight days before the fatal event of Wednesday evening.

A short distance below Alexandria, the Captain gave orders to load the "peace-maker" with powder and ball. This gun is stationed in the bow of the ship, on a revolving carriage, so that it may be fired from either side. An ordinary charge of powder for it, is thirty pounds. It carries a ball weighing two hundred and twenty-five pounds; and such is the precision with which it may be fired, as ascertained from actual experiments, that the Captain will guarantee to hit an object the size of a hoghead, in the water nine times in ten, at a distance of half a mile.

"The gun being loaded, the first thing is to ascertain the precise distance of the object to be fired at. This is done by means of an instrument, constructed under trigonometrical principles, the scale on which indicates the distance at a glance. The next thing is to give the gun the proper elevation. This done by means of a self-acting lock, on an arm of which is a scale which indicates the precise elevation which is necessary to reach a given distance with the ball. A spring on the top of the lock is then brought up to the point indicated, the hammer is pulled back, and at the very point of time when by the ship's motion the gun reaches that point, and never before nor afterwards, the gun is of itself discharged. The precise means by which this is effected, are known only to the Navy Department and the inventor; but the fact is indisputable, and the value of the invention seems to me to be incalculable.

"All the preparation for firing, with the exception simply of putting the powder

and ball into the gun, was made by Captain Stockton personally. By means of a tackle fixed to the breach, a motion was given to the gun similar to that imparted by a heavy swell, and when it reached the point indicated it was discharged. The ball in this case travelled about two miles before it hit the water, and then bounded several times. The Princeton went down the river as far as Mt. Vernon. In going down, the "peace-maker" was discharged three times, and in returning twice.

"On the fourth fire the ball struck on the land, and its effect was lost sight of by those on board—so the party demanded another fire, and respectfully requested the Captain to put in a little more powder this time. Before firing for the fifth and last time, the Captain said he should take the sense of the company. 'All those in favor of another fire will say, Aye.' The air resounded with 'Aye!' 'All those opposed to another fire will say, No.' Not a solitary voice.

"The Ayes have it," said the Captain; "I have the assent of Congress, and I'll go ahead." Probably fifty pounds of powder went into the "peace-maker" this time. As before, the gun was fired by the Captain himself. The ball went, probably, four miles before it struck. It bounded fifteen times on the ice, in the course of which it performed a half circle.

"One of these guns, the 'Oregon,' was manufactured in England. The other, 'Peace-Maker,' was made in New York, and is by far the better piece of workmanship of the two.

"The Captain told me that when he applied to the manufacturer to do the job, he (the manufacturer) declared that it could not be done; and it was not until Captain Stockton had promised him that he would pay all the expense of an attempt out of his own pocket, that the manufacturer would consent to make a trial. Before a month had elapsed after this, however, the manufacturer, seeing that it was perfectly practicable, became as great an enthusiast in the matter as the Captain himself was."

The circumstances connected with the explosion of the gun on board the Princeton were investigated by a Committee, and are thus reported:

"The Committee, at the request of Captain Stockton, proceeded to examine witnesses, as to the causes of the explosion, and accordingly called upon the officers whose duty was most immediately connected with the loading of the gun, for such information as they had to give.

"Lieut. Hunt, ordnance officer in charge of the great guns, represented that he loaded the gun himself, with but twenty-five pounds of powder—the usual charge being thirty pounds. Over the powder was placed a single shot, with the usual number of wads. That the persons nearest the gun at the time of the explosion were Capt. Stockton, Mr. King, the gunner of the ship, and himself.

"Lieutenant Hunt also states that this gun has been repeatedly fired with a charge of thirty-five pounds of powder, and once in New York, with a charge of forty-nine pounds.

"In the statements of Lieutenant Hunt, Mr. King, the gunner of the ship concurs. Mr. King is a blacksmith by trade, and is of opinion that the gun was indifferently made of iron of an inferior quality.

"The Committee, as well from the foregoing testimony, as from their own personal observation and examination before and after the accident, have no hesitation in exonerating Captain Stockton and every officer and man under his command, from the slightest imputation of rashness or carelessness, and are unanimously of opinion that this melancholy event rests upon causes over which they could have no control.

W. BRANFORD SHUBRICK,

Chairman.

JOHN T. McLAUGHLIN, Secretary.

TRADE WITH TEXAS.

By an order from the Texan government all foreign vessels trading upon the Sabine who may receive Texas cotton on board, are compelled to pay a tonnage duty of \$1 per ton; and a revenue cutter, the Santa Anna, has been sent to the mouth of the river to enforce the order. A battery on the Texas side of the river is now erecting, and two long nines have been brought for its defence. It is intended to bring all vessels to, that may be bound in or out and enforce the order. Capt. Taylor, of the U. S. Cutter Vigilant, writes to the New Orleans collector that if any American vessel shall be seized, he will not only retake it, but capture the Texan vessel.—Reformer.

THE WHIG'S PRAYER.

Give me a Bank—a paper Bank;
The best machine for saving labor;
For who would toil and sweat himself,
When there's a chance to sweat his neighbor!
So let us have a bank, my boys,
A fortune thus we all may win,
Like lilies of the valley live,
Who toil not, neither do they spin.

From Tail's Magazine.

LOVE STRONG IN DEATH.

BY BENJAMIN ELLIOTT.

[This poem is founded on a fact, witnessed by a friend of the author. A boy, when at the point of death, requested his mother that she would give him something to keep for her sake.]

The brother of two sisters
Drew painfully his breath;
A strange fear had come o'er him,
For love was strong in death.
The fire of fatal fever
Burned darkly on his cheek;
And often to his mother
He spoke or tried to speak.

He said, "The quiet moonlight,
Beneath the shadowed hill,
Seem'd dreaming of good angels,
While all the woods were still;

resolve, he seized the extraordinary tools of death, and in an instant drove the blade of the chisel into his breast!

"The hair rose upon Shryack's head, and fright spread, like a sheet of snow over his face.

"Kingston! Kingston! my dear fellow— you—d—rascal, Kingston! do you want to have me hung?—Hold on—don't you die till I call somebody."

Shryack ran to the door, and called like a madman to some people across the street.

"Hallo! here! say you Mister! all you stupid people! make haste over here, or there'll be a murder!"
The people crowded into Kingston's house.

"Don't die Kingston! Don't chisel me that way! Don't die till you tell them who did it!"

"I did it myself," said Kingston.
There, that's all!